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The Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy Newsletter

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## SAGP Newsletter 2009/10.4 Pac

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# SOCIETY FOR ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHY

Founded 1953

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## NEWSLETTER 2009/10.4

You are cordially invited to the meeting of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy with the Pacific Division, at the Westin St Francis, San Francisco: Thursday, April 1, 6-9 p.m. (for location, see the APA list on site).

Chair: Mark Wheeler, *San Diego State University*

Joel E. Mann, *St. Norbert College*, "Causation, Agency, and Law in Antiphon: On some subtleties in the second Tetralogy"

John Thorp, *University of Western Ontario*, "Intelligible Matter in Aristotle"

John Bowin, *UC Santa Cruz*, "Aristotle on Learning in *De Anima* II 5"

### Future 2010 Meetings:

October 15-17, 2010, Fordham University Lincoln Center: Annual joint meeting with the Society for the Study of Islamic Philosophy and Science, and other groups. A CFP is attached.

December 27-30, 2010, with the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, Boston MA at the Copley Connection.

### Socrates

Chair: Tony Preus, *Binghamton University*

Anna Greco, *University of Toronto at Mississauga*, "Measuring Pleasures and Pains in the *Protagoras*"

Anna Lännström, *Stonehill College*, "How Socrates' theology undermined the practice of sacrifice"

Danielle Layne, *The Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium)*, "Ceaselessly Testing the Good of Death"

### SAGP Meetings for 2011:

January 6-9, 2011, with the American Philological Association, in San Antonio, TX.

Chair: TBA

Giampaolo Abbate, *Universidade de Lisboa (Portugal)*, "The meaning of *hó pote ón* in Aristotle's *GC* and *PA*"

Jeffrey Dirk Wilson, *The Catholic University of America*, "Aristotle on Food"

Albert Joosse, *Utrecht University*, "Shame and conflict – Lysis' philosophical *akrasia*"

Central Division: Minneapolis

Pacific Division: April 20-23, 2011, San Diego

Submissions for these programs are due August 1. See below for details.

October 2011: Annual Joint Meeting with the Society for the Study of Islamic Philosophy and Science, and other groups.

### SAGP Meetings for 2012

January 5-8, 2012, with the American Philological Association, in Philadelphia

## **SAGP DUES**

Dues for electronic receipt of the papers are \$10 per year US. Dues for hard copy receipt of papers are \$20 per year US. Make out your check to SAGP. We honor multi-year dues payments. Those who do not have a US funds checking account are especially encouraged to pay by credit card, since that avoids bank charges. A credit card form is attached at the end of this newsletter.

## **Julius Moravcsik**

Julius Moravcsik was for many years the Pacific Division member of the SAGP Program Committee. It seems appropriate to note his passing in the Pacific Division newsletter by reprinting the obituary that appeared in the Stanford Report on the occasion of the Stanford University memorial service, October 1, 2009:

### **Memorial service on Oct. 7, 2009, for 'pragmatic Platonist' Julius Moravcsik**

Hungarian-born Julius Moravcsik, former Philosophy Department chair, made important contributions to the study of the philosophy of language and of ancient Greek philosophy.



BY JANELLE WEAVER

A memorial service for Julius Moravcsik, professor emeritus of philosophy and a tireless advocate of ancient Greek views of ethics, will be held at noon on Wednesday, Oct. 7, at the Stanford Faculty Club.

Moravcsik, who died at 78 of natural causes at the convalescent care wing at Lytton Gardens in Palo Alto on June 3, made significant contributions to the philosophy of language and the study of ancient Greek philosophy. He described himself as "a Platonist but with a pragmatic flavor"; his eclectic and wide-ranging interests included the philosophy of friendship, sports and aesthetics. He served as chair of the Philosophy Department from 1972 to 1975 and again from 1983 to 1986.

"If I could use one word to describe Julius, it would be intensity," said his former student Professor John Woods of Kings College London and the University of British Columbia. "He was very serious about what he did, and he was not happy with mere professional competence." He added that Moravcsik thought of philosophy as his vocation; he worked hard and was impatient with slow results. "He was not anyone's disciple," said Woods. "Julius' works were rigorously constructed. He was a careful, absolutely original thinker, but he was always mindful of intellectual debts owed to others."

A significant influence on his thinking was linguist and public intellectual Noam Chomsky, who in the 1950s introduced the concept of universal grammar – an innate set of linguistic principles shared by all humans. An early appreciator of Chomsky, Moravcsik advocated the idea that "ordinary language was amenable to rigorous analysis of how communication takes place," said John Perry, Stanford professor emeritus of philosophy. "He emphasized the complexity and importance of lexical meaning of individual words to the study of philosophy."

### **Studied ancient Greek philosophy**

Moravcsik's other major contribution was in the study of ancient Greek philosophy. He promoted an Aristotelian view of ethics, which emphasizes character and virtue rather than rules and individual acts. "I kept up my broad interest in different parts of philosophy outside Aristotle as well because I was convinced that this was the way the Ancient Greeks did it and this was how we should do it today," Moravcsik wrote in an autobiographical essay. "Being very narrow-minded may be an advantage in some fields, but it does not help much in philosophy."

Woods, who was Moravcsik's doctoral student at the University of Michigan in the 1960s, said his mentor also was known for his generosity and popularity with students: "Many times he went the extra mile to help students and give them encouragement," he said. "Julius taught me a very important lesson about intellectual tenacity. We were studying hard problems, but he simply would not let us be defeated by them," said Woods.

Moravcsik was born in Budapest, Hungary, on April 26, 1931. His father was Gyula (Julius) Moravcsik, a professor of Greek philology at the University of Budapest and an internationally known specialist in Byzantine history. As a child during World War II, Moravcsik remembered buying groceries with food coupons and carrying them home himself – he was the only family member old enough for the task, but not old enough to be conscripted on the spot. He remembered a grenade exploding next to him, seeing two soldiers killed for no reason and finding 30 dead soldiers in the garden. The family's home was destroyed.

Recalling German writer Georg Büchner's phrase "Man is an abyss," he asked in his autobiographical essay: "If we try to peer into it, we recoil. I always thought that trust had to be the main element that brings us all together, but after what we had seen and heard, how can one hope for the unity of all mankind?"

After a postwar stint in Paris, he received his bachelor's and doctoral degrees from Harvard in 1953 and 1959, respectively. He was a professor at the University of Michigan from 1960 until 1968, when he came to Stanford. "In 1968, I flew to the University of Michigan to look for a job, and he had just left. I remember clearly how devastated the graduate students were," said Perry, who was recruited to Stanford by Moravcsik in 1974.

### **Philosophy of friendship**

At Stanford, Moravcsik launched new courses, such as one in the philosophy of friendship. "The department centered on Julius," said Perry. "He turned the Philosophy Department into a major player in undergraduate education. He put his great energy and drive into helping other people and doing thoughtful things." At one time, after the suicide of one of his graduate students, Moravcsik worked tirelessly to polish his dissertation work and turn it into a book under the student's name. "It was incredibly meaningful to friends and family," Perry recalled.

Dagfinn Føllesdal, professor of philosophy at Stanford and Moravcsik's colleague since his arrival at Stanford in 1968, said that Moravcsik encouraged students to think critically and form their own views. "Building up competence in students was his main aim in life," he said. Mohan Matthen, professor of philosophy at the University of Toronto and a former doctoral student of Moravcsik's in the 1970s, noted that "he had many PhD students who became influential and are in prominent positions today."

Moravcsik was the author of a number of books and a recipient of Fulbright, Guggenheim and National Endowment for the Humanities fellowships. He also was a fellow at the Center for Advanced

Study in the Behavioral Sciences and won a Humboldt Prize for Senior Foreign Humanists. He also served as president of the Pacific division of the American Philosophical Association and president of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy.

About his life, Moravcsik remained philosophical: "My views have not been shared by many and at times they were not understood," Moravcsik wrote. "This led to a conversation with Noam Chomsky. He said to me: 'People will not understand you.' My reply was: 'You know, one cannot have everything in life.'"

Moravcsik is survived by his wife, Rita, who lives at Stanford, and two sons, Adrian of Burlingame and Peter of Woodside, and a sister, Edith, who lives in Milwaukee.

*Janelle Weaver is an intern at the Stanford University News Service.*

Stanford Report [online], Oct. 1, 2009.

[http://news.stanford.edu/news/2009/september28/moravcsik\\_memorial\\_service\\_100109.html](http://news.stanford.edu/news/2009/september28/moravcsik_memorial_service_100109.html). Reprinted by permission.

### **SAGP Speaker Policy**

The Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy sponsors sessions with the annual meetings of the Eastern, Central, and Pacific Divisions of the American Philosophical Association, and the annual meeting of the American Philological Association. There is also an annual meeting with the Society for the Study of Islamic Philosophy and Science and other groups. Occasionally the SAGP meets with various other societies. Those wishing to present a paper at any meeting of the SAGP are requested to contact [apreus@binghamton.edu](mailto:apreus@binghamton.edu). Membership in SAGP is required for consideration of papers by the SAGP program committees.

Submitters of papers for the meetings with the two APAs should include their name and address directly below the title of the paper on a separate title page, and nowhere else; that allows for anonymous review by the Program Committee. Submitters should also include a cover message indicating the meeting(s) of the Society at which they would like, or be willing, to present the paper. We very much prefer electronic submissions; make the email message itself the "cover page", and attach the paper. We prefer attachments in Word (".doc") or "Rich Text Format" (".RTF"); if you have some other program that you want to use, please contact [apreus@binghamton.edu](mailto:apreus@binghamton.edu) first. A word to the wise – electronic transmission tends to garble Greek (because not all the reviewers have the same Greek fonts installed), so please transliterate.

**The Program Committee has requested that submissions be limited to 3000 words MAX, and suggests that submissions less than 1000 words are too short to be evaluated effectively.** Accepted papers may be revised up to a max of 5000 words for distribution.

### **Deadlines:**

**February 1** for Eastern Division meeting following December and/or the American Philological Association meeting the following January.

**June 1** for the annual SAGP/SSIPS meeting, held in October of each year, scheduled for Oct. 15, 16, 17 2010, at Fordham Lincoln Center. A CFP is included below.

**August 1** for Pacific and Central subsequent Spring Semester.

These deadlines reflect the necessity for a month turnaround to the Program Committee and a month to put the program together. Submitters should expect a response about six weeks after each of the deadline dates. The members of the Program Committee are: the President (Deborah Modrak) and Secretary (A. Preus), ex officio; John Anton, Elizabeth Asmis, Fred Miller, Mark Wheeler, and Thomas M. Robinson.

### **Society Web Site:**

We are very pleased to announce that the SAGP Web Site is functioning well, thanks to our Webmaster, Chris Tennberg. The URL is [<http://www.societyforancientgreekphilosophy.com/>](http://www.societyforancientgreekphilosophy.com/). It appears quickly on Google.

### **ELEATICA 2010**

The next ELEATICA will take place on May 13-15, in Ascea, Italy. Its main features include

- three lectures by A. P. D. Mourelatos on Xenophanes' natural philosophy (in Italian, with an English-language text available)
- first performance of T. M. Robinson's play "The Other Olympians. Poets and Philosophers at the Olympiad of 476 BCE" (in Italian, within the archaeological area of Elea)
- the awarding of honorary citizenship of Elea to Jonathan Barnes
- the presentation of several new books (along with the local library).

All are cordially welcome. For more information please contact [www.eleatica.it](http://www.eleatica.it).